

THE

# MONSTER • MAG :

A HALLOWEEN ZINE

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW!

BACKSTAGE WITH  
THE BLAIR WITCH

THE GOOD  
GHOULS  
GUIDE TO  
SNAGGING  
A MORTAL:  
HOW TO  
WOO YOUR  
HUMAN  
HUNNY!

25+ TALENTED  
CONTRIBUTORS!

ILLUSTRATIONS!

STORIES!

ARTICLES!







**KEEV**  
Illustrator

FELL DOWN BACK  
OF SOFA.  
MISSING;  
PRESUMED DEAD

-  
@Tiggs\_Doodles



**INDIGO**  
Illustrator/  
Writer

HUGGED TOO  
MANY BUGLINGS

-  
@eyespyscience



**KING**  
Illustrator

CAUSE OF DEATH -  
CURIOSITY.  
"THEY LIVED  
HOPING  
SATISFACTION  
WOULD BRING  
THEM BACK"

-  
@therewasfood  
@kingsdoodles



**BURT**  
Writer

"HERE LIES BURT,  
HAVING  
SUCCUMBED TO  
TOO MUCH COFFEE  
AND TOO MUCH  
YEARNING"

-  
@burtspaceship



**ZANMENSEI**  
Illustrator

DRANK A  
MYSTERIOUS  
FORMULA. DIED  
IMMEDIATELY.

-  
@zanmensei



**JESS B**  
Writer

HOW SHE DIED,  
WE'LL NEVER TELL;  
SHE LIVED HER LIFE  
AND WENT  
STRAIGHT TO HELL

t@HearJessRoar



**KIM KELLY**  
Illustrator

DIED AFTER A LONG  
FORGOTTEN CUP  
OF TEA BECAME  
SENTIENT AND  
STRANGLERED HER  
WITH ITS TEABAG

-  
@KimberbeeGifts



**HANNAH**  
Illustrator

SHE DIED THE WAY  
SHE LIVED: PEPPED  
ON COFFEE AND  
VIBRATING WITH  
ANXIETY

-  
@\_monomercy\_



**JORDAN JEFFREYS**  
Illustrator

MAULED BY A  
THREE-HEADED  
SHARK

@froggijo

## MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS!



**CLEVER**  
Writer

DROWNED IN A  
RIVER OF  
HOMOEROTICISM  
AND ENNUI.



**DAWNIE**  
Illustrator

GAY LIL' HEART  
GAVE OUT

-  
@ddawnniee



**CEDAR**  
Illustrator

FOUND DEAD NEXT  
TO A HALF-EATEN  
PIECE OF CUSTARD  
PIE. OFFICIALS  
BELIEVE THEY DIED  
DOING WHAT  
THEY LOVED.

@wildartist4



**JEN PENDRAGON**  
Writer

SUFFOCATED  
WHEN HER 'TBR'  
PILE TOPPLED AND  
CRUSHED HER

-  
Campsite.bio  
/Jenisaur



**EMILY ROSENTHAL**  
Illustrator

SMITED BY GOD

-  
@ek\_roenthal



**ANONYMOUS-GOB**  
Illustrator

COULDN'T REACH  
THE TOP SHELF:  
FELL TO THEIR  
DEATH GETTING  
SPAGHETTI

@Anonymous\_Gob





C. LIGHT  
Writer

FOUND BURIED  
UNDER A  
MOUNTAIN OF  
DRAFTS AND  
SENTENCE  
FRAGMENTS

-  
@sealightwrites



VAL  
Writer

SHOT THROUGH  
THE HEART...  
AND YOU'RE TO  
BLAME!

-



MARY FENNER  
Illustrator/  
Comic\_Artist

BURIED ALIVE AND  
IS NOW A FOREST  
SPIRIT

-  
@hunibeetea



CAITLIN BAIRD  
Illustrator

HER HEDONISM  
HELPED HER  
HOOVER  
HANDFULS OF  
HERSHEYS,  
HURTING HER  
HEALTH, HEART  
HEMORRHAGING  
HASTILY.

-  
@illucaitlin



ISABELLE AUSTIN  
Illustrator

SAID 'BEETLEJUICE'  
THREE TIMES

-  
@upperstories  
@isabellecaustin



THE MIASMA  
Illustrator

YOU KNOW ;)

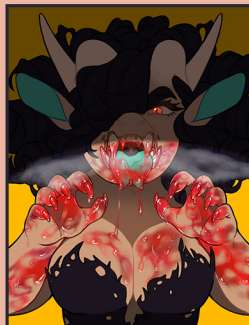
-  
@the.miasma



HOLLAND B  
Illustrator

VICTIM OF HIS  
OWN HUBRIS

-  
@freaquin



DINO  
Illustrator

SHE DIED AS SHE  
LIVED...  
VIA SNUSNU

-  
patreon.com/  
doopadeer



ALEX MUSIELAK  
Illustrator

AN ARTIST, BUT  
THEN NO ONE'S  
PERFECT

-  
@tinolikestodraw



ASH SERNA  
Illustrator

SUFFOCATION BY  
FLUTE SOLO

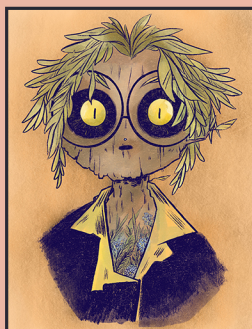
-  
@AshTreeHollow  
@AshHollowArt



OCTAVIA  
Writer

EATEN ALIVE BY  
UNDEAD  
CHEERLEADERS

-  
@shrimpwonder



FAYE  
Illustrator

CAUSE OF DEATH:  
UNKNOWN.  
SUBJECT FOUND  
SURROUNDED BY  
UNUSUALLY LARGE  
NUMBER OF EGG  
CARTONS.

-  
@ppixxie



MYA P.  
Writer

AN EXTREME  
PAPERCUT

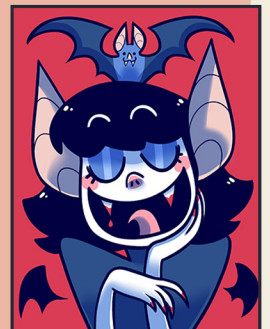
-  
@melancholymya\_



BELLA  
Writer

STRUCK BY  
LIGHTNING

-  
@catmemer



HAYLEY SCHAEFFER  
Illustrator

OVERWORKED

-  
@creaturologie



ALEX MUSIELAK

# DON'T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK...



HOT  
MONSTER  
LADIES\*!!!

CALL  
1-666-  
SPOOKS  
TONIGHT!

\*NO SCAM!  
100% MONSTER!  
100% LADY!



# THE GOOD GHOULS GUIDE TO SNAGGING A MORTAL

JEN PENDRAGON

More and more often, mortals are becoming interested in our supernatural good-looks and amazing powers in bed. But a ghoulish/mortal relationship is markedly different than dating someone who's a little more like us. So what do mortals like? And how do we get one to join us in howling at the moon? Mortal expert Guillermina Robles reports from beyond.

## TALK TO THEM ABOUT THEIR STAR SIGN

Humans believe in a horror-scope. They identify with their sign which is based on the star of the best-rated horror film from the year they were born. Give them compliments comparing them to said star. Quote the film at them. If things start to get really serious, start to reenact the film with them—sometimes this can make for a very hot surprise!

*"Recently I dated a mortal whose horror-scope was Drew Barrymore in Scream. I spent a whole week calling her house and wouldn't identify who I was! She was so relieved when I told her it was just me."* —Swamp Girl, age 326

## MORTALS NEED TO BE WATERED AND FED REGULARLY

We might like that "just dead" smell, but mortals are not so keen on it. Dirt and rotting flesh just remind them that they're going to die one day, too, so they regularly dip themselves in water. Some of them prefer to stand under the water as it sprays on them. They often apply bubbles to their skin or fill their tubs with color and glitter in the form of a bath bomb.

Ask about their "signature scent" and apply it to yourself (if you have corporeal form) and you'll be on their "good" list in no time! As for feeding them, this one's a cinch. It seems mortals are used to the fact that a lot of us don't eat—or at least don't eat the same things as them. You can avoid awkward dining experiences by ordering delivery, which often arrives with a bonus snack for you\*.

*\*Check area restrictions for whether your delivery mortal is actually for your dining pleasure or not.*



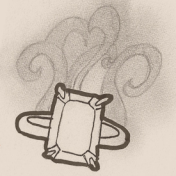
## 'KNOWING YOUR ANGLES' DOESN'T HAVE TO DO WITH SNAPPING BONES

Mortals talk about this all the time. "Angles" refer to camera angles when taking selfies—especially when they're trying to alter their appearance. We are super lucky in that most of us don't



don't show up on film, and if we do, we're always perfect just the way we are. Mortals aren't so lucky. They've got weird noses and some of them are afraid of an extra chin? Anyway don't offer to break their bones if they're discussing this topic with you. And always assure them they're attractive at any angle. That'll get you pretty far on its own, tbh.

## DO NOT GIVE CURSED GIFTS WITHOUT CONSENT



As it turns out, mortals are not keen on being cursed or even taking a chance on something that might bring a curse upon their home. They're very wary of the unknown, which is a huge reason for the divide between their culture and ours in the past. Don't undo all the hard work of the sexy sorcerers that came before—ask before bestowing a gift with a 'bonus feature'. There are plenty of ways to prepare your mortal without ruining the surprise. You can definitely keep the item itself a secret. However, they will want to know things like how long the curse lasts, if there's a way to counter it, and what exactly the effects of the curse are. They're not being ungrateful, it's just part of their culture to try and control everything in their lives sometimes. You can see other examples of this in how they pick their career path before they've fully matured, and how they created kettles that heat water to different temperatures.

*"I compare Cursed Gifts with a Mogwai. They're quite lovely (how else would they lure in victims?) but they come with some rules. So maybe start with a Cursed Items Pamphlet, to help guide your mortal through taking care of a Curse, before diving into the heavy stuff."* —Draco Draconis, Immortal

## KEEP YOUR OWN DATING HISTORY SIMPLE

Mortals get very jealous, very quickly. They don't like know that you've dated before at all, let alone that you've been dating for centuries.

When discussing your own history, try to keep things as simple as possible so that your mortal doesn't start trying to compete with you or with one (or more) of your previous partners. That's not to say we recommend *lying*, either. If your mortal really presses you for details, try being as honest as possible while reminding them that eternity can get boring. You can always gently guide them back to focusing on the present with another (NON-CURSED) gift, or suggestion that you send out for Uber Eats.

*Guillermina Robles is a mortal anthropology expert and freelance journalist originally from Oaxaca. She now resides in Portland, Oregon with her mortal partner, Emily. Together they run a non-profit for Senior and special needs pets (both mortal and supernatural).*







MARY FENNER



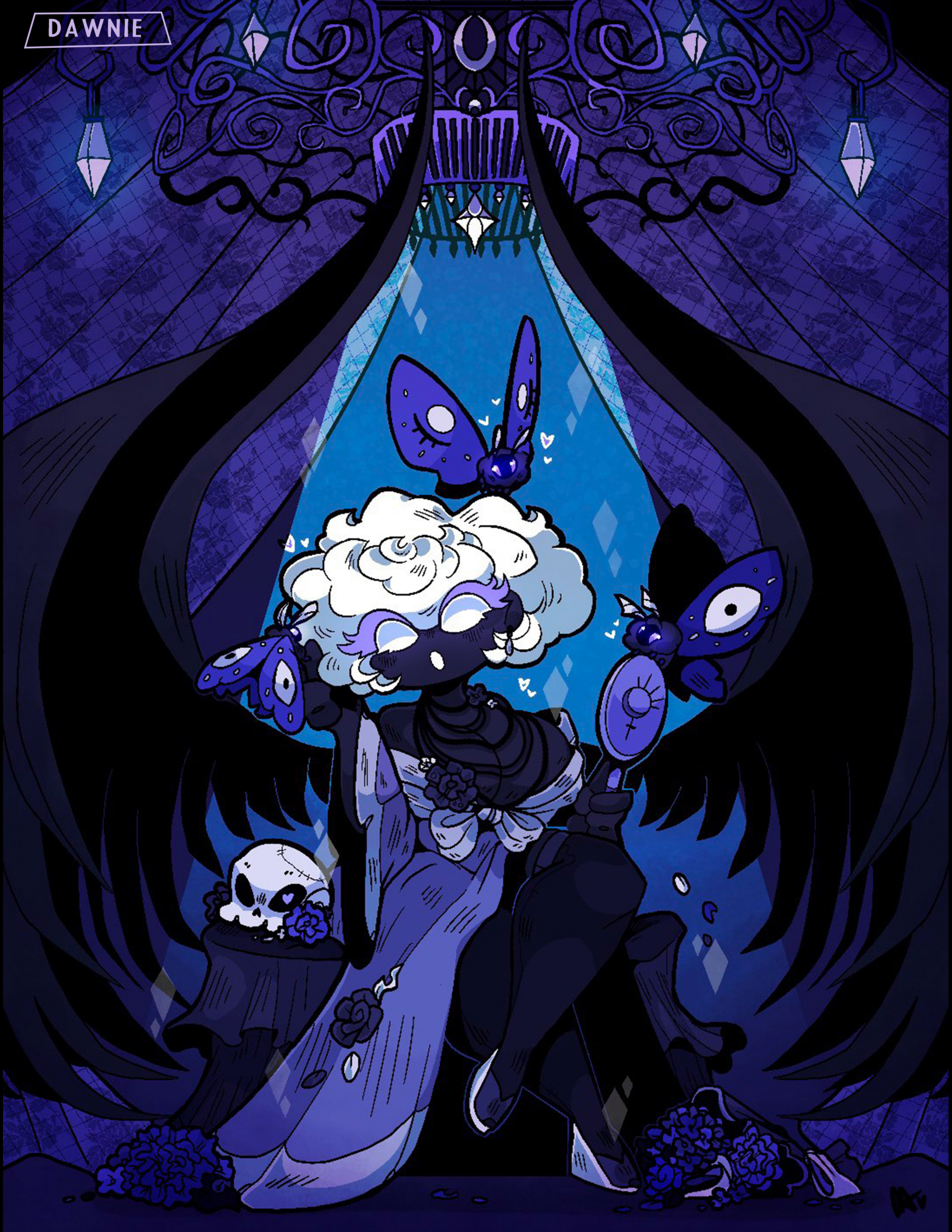


BELLA





DAWNIE





# FORTUNE'S FAVOUR

BURT PEANUTS

The October gale swept through Salem Harbor with such ferocity it left us quite glad to make port and head into the nearest tavern, leaving the raging sea behind us.

The tavern was warm and crowded, many sailors seeking refuge along with several men from the Custom House, all enjoying a drink before once again braving the winds and lashing rains.

"Benjamin Hawkins, as I live and breathe!" I had scarcely walked through the tavern door and shook off the rain when a jolly, booming voice greeted me. I was delighted to espy the face of my dearest friend amongst the crowd. Seeing him after months at sea warmed my soul to such a degree that I all but ran to greet him.

"Charlie Fortune, aren't you a sight for weary eyes," I said, for it was true. His outstretched arms embraced me, and all my cares fell away.

"Come, have a drink and sit with us. We are sharing frightening tales and Thomas swears he saw a spectre last weekend in the old Turner house." Charlie winked, put a tankard in my hand, and off we went.

The corner table was filled with the usual suspects, familiar tars and stevedores who called Salem home. Old friends are always a welcoming sight, and they raised their glasses in cheer when I sat down with Charlie.

"Surely Benji has a terrifying tale he can grace us with?" Thomas said, tilting his mug of ale in my direction.

"And what if I did?" I grinned.

Charlie slapped my thigh most enthusiastically. He knew what story I'd in mind.

"Have I told ye all of the mermaid?" said I.

"Ain't no such thing as mermaids, lad," Lefty scoffed, leaning back in his chair.

"I saw one once! In the West Indies!" Davey piped up, and was met with a few laughs from the boys.

"Do you remember the wreck of the Olinda some years past?" I asked the table.

The fellows nodded. It was big news along the wharves. Her cause of wreck was officially recorded as related to the Great Gale of Georges Bank, and she broke up upon the rocks.

"Myself being the only surviving member of the crew, I can attest to the actual reason for her sinking, and I tell you most empathetically it was due to the actions of a mermaid."

The boys all quieted, and I leaned in to tell my tale.

"We set sail on a Friday, though we all assuredly know what bad luck it is," I began, "and were not long departed from Salem Harbor, when Captain Rollins spied a mermaid sitting upon a rock jutting from the waves. Truth be told, though I have been at sea since I was a lad of 14, I myself never believed in mermaids until that day."

Lefty scoffed again but was quickly scolded into silence by the boys.

Davey's eyes grew large. "Did the mermaid have pale blue skin and dark hair? 'Twas what the mermaid in the West Indies looked like."

"'Twas exactly what this mermaid looked like," I nodded, "and she watched us from the rocks while she combed her hair, singing with the most beautifully bewitching voice one could imagine. So bewitching indeed, that our captain, God rest his soul, sailed directly towards her."

Our little corner of the tavern was silent now, save the soft clinking of tankards and the crackling roar of the fireplace.

"Her song was sweet indeed, offering riches to fill our holds, tempting us with talk of her sisters, each one prettier than the last, all



hungry for male company. Of the men of our ship I alone was resistant to her charms, and vainly pleaded with the captain to bring the ship about lest we strike the rocks. A few sailors had already jumped overboard in an attempt to swim to her, and were quickly lost in the sea. But no, the captain insisted this pretty mermaid would make a fine prize for the East India Marine Society. We hit the rocks on our port side.

"We heard the mermaid laugh then, but there was no merriment in it. She seemed to delight in our peril, her green eyes flashing. She was the most beautiful and the most terrifying creature I have ever beheld."

The table sat in absolute silence, all eyes on me.

"I shall spare you the goriest details of the swift sinking of our ship, but through the pounding waves I saw I was the only man left alive. I clung to a bit of a spar and was preparing to make my peace with the world, when suddenly the mermaid jumped from her rocky perch to meet me face to face.

"Her brow was quizzical. 'You are not like these other men,' she mused. 'How is it you alone are unaffected by my song?'"

"I replied that surely it was because I hadn't an ear at all for music, unlike the rest of my crew."

Charlie elbowed me. He knew this to be a false recollection of events. But the truth of it shall never be uttered in a crowded tavern.

"Go on then, Ben," he said with twinkling eye. "What happened next?"

"She gave me a pearl earring, and in exchange--for one must never fail to return a mermaid's gift in kind--I gave her a gold ring engraved with an anchor, meant as a token for a sweetheart. She promised me fair winds and following seas as long as I should wear the pearl, and I asked her to give the ring to someone she truly loved. She said she had just the mermaid in mind, blew me a kiss, and leapt beneath the waves, leaving me alone and adrift as the seas quieted."

I pulled off my hat at this moment and turned my head, to show the company that a fine pearl did indeed ornament my ear.

Lefty shook his head while Davey stared in wonderment, and still everyone was silent. Quite a satisfactory reaction.

"I'll drink to that," said Charlie, offering his tankard in salute. We all drained our drinks in one go.

Before long, it was time to take our leave.

"Gentlemen, the company has been most edifying, but I'm afraid I must escort young Mr. Hawkins to his room for the night," Charlie said with a wink, reaching for his hat and coat. We bade them all goodnight, and out we stepped into clear moonlight, marveling at how quickly the gale had passed.

"You left out my favorite part of the tale," Charlie said, once we were well out of earshot of the tavern. "Won't you tell me again?" he pleaded, laughing.

"You know well that's between God and myself," I teased, but told him as it went.

"In truth, the mermaid had spoken thus: 'You are not like these other men, for the love in your heart is different. Your heart belongs not to a woman, nor to silver, nor to gold.'"

"Indeed," I told her, thinking I had nothing else to lose, "though I have traveled the seas since I was a lad, sailed innumerable times round the Horn, I always come back to Salem, and to my one love Charlie Fortune."

Here Charlie sighed. "That is my favorite part."

"Let me tell it!" I laughed. "She then said, 'I have lived thousands of years and will live a thousand more and I can sense the rare love that radiates from your heart for your Charlie Fortune.'"

"She saved you because you declared your love for me!" Charlie's hand flew to his breast, and he laughed again.

"She saved me because she liked your ring," I gave him a wink.

We continued our merry banter until we reached Charlie's boarding rooms, and I gladly let myself be led in, his hand warm on the small of my back.

I was truly home at last.









KING









HAYLEY SCHAEFFER



# DARKROOM

## C. LIGHT

Other women petrify me.

I've been this way my whole life. It's not that I'm sheltered. I've lived with and befriended and admired plenty from afar. It's just...as soon as the admirable get close, is all. They leave some sort of shyness spell in their wake. A strange gravity makes my whole posture wilt. Eye contact becomes out of the question.

They petrify me, but never like Georgie does.

Georgie calls herself an artist, just like me. I've seen her work. We've all seen what happens when some wriggling sex pest of a person disappears overnight, only for our statue garden to appear fuller the next day. Yes, we've all seen it, and it is unmistakably art. I admire that. There's a lot to admire with Georgie.

So it was a surprise when she announced she wanted to switch mediums. A break from her sculptures. A way to focus on herself, she said. I was intrigued, but I didn't think much of it.

Until I saw her flyer.

LOOKING FOR PHOTOGRAPHER.

With a number listed below in golden ink.

I couldn't scrub gold out of my mind for days. So I called her. It was a moment of stupefying bravery, just talking to her, but my voice did not waver. My hands did not shake. Listening to her was like listening to smoke. Hazy, warm. Gets in your head and doesn't come back out.

We had an agreement within the hour.

Our setup was a complicated exchange at first. She would knock three times, then enter my studio that I'd kept pitch-black for her arrival. I would already be inside, listening to the rustling as she pulled out her costumes, waiting with my equipment.

Behind the camera is the safest place. No shyness can reach me here. My models invite me to look, so I do, and I do so gladly. The lenses also offer protection against the stone-magic. All I ever needed to do is wait for her cue and--

Lights on--

And there she was. Georgie in black lace. In a corset, in velvet. Hair up in frisky, wriggling curlers as she grinned at a prop phone. Garter belts hugging her thighs. Her in a classic toga scene, dripping in irony. Holding up a fake stone head, laughing atop a fake stone column. Pin-up at its peak.

But it didn't matter what she wore, really. Georgie could pose in a burlap sack and instantly transform into a calendar model to kill for. It's just her...presence. Something about the desperate nest of snakes around her head. Tiny mouths hanging in the air, a thousand halos, gawping and dripping with neon green poison. It's something about her eyes-- just pits, sunken into their sockets. Little more than empty holes that seem to burrow out of her skull and into some eternity. The dark inside of them waits. Impatient to suck the light and softness out of flesh until only cold stone remains.

They steal the light from my pictures, too. I lost many days in the darkroom trying to get it right, but every print developed ended up with holes where eyes should be. Like someone held a match below it and burned through the ink.

Which meant my job wasn't done. Which meant my integrity was at stake.

What choice did that leave me but to try again?

And again?

It became a habit. Shoots started to take us days, so in between the long hours we would dine together in the dark. Whatever she eats smells like lavender and blood, and over the cavalcade of hissing and gristly meat-tearing, she would ask, so gently, if there was a reason I was always alone.

I didn't have an answer.



And then one day she didn't answer in return. Left me stuck sitting there, waiting for her light cue so we could start. Calling into the dark got me nothing. Then all at once, there she was, close enough for me to feel her breath on my neck. So warm. She smelled like smoke and blood and lavender.

I was petrified--

"Pull back," she said. Her voice wavered. Unusual for her. "And I'll stop. Pull back and I'll be gone."

--and then I wondered, despite all her bravado in front of the camera, if she was just as petrified as me. If such a thing could even be possible. The thought chipped away at that shyness-spell. It chipped away at stone to find warm flesh underneath.

"But if not," she says. I could feel the snakes start to move. Their heads slithered across my scalp, my cheekbones, curling around my ears. They dripped venom onto my skin. It burned, but I did not care. "Keep your eyes closed."

And then I knew we understood each other perfectly.

The next day, while she still slept, I crept back to the darkroom. I toiled to finish the prints from our last shoot. Finally, the paper came out whole and unblemished. Picture perfect. Pin-up in its highest form, and a contract completed.

When she woke up, I went to show her. She'd turned all the lights back on and was standing carefully away, head down, back turned. I passed her a copy. She picked it up and looked at it for a second. Then she laughed. I heard the tearing of paper.

"You missed a spot," she said, passing it back to me.

And she was right. I did. There was a new rip in the photo, crossing through one of her eyes. Which meant our job wasn't done. Which meant that our integrity was at stake.

What choice did that leave us but to keep trying, as long as it took?

We're artists, after all.







HANNAH

NEW!

# PUMPKIN BREW

ONLY

6G



MAY CAUSE EXCESSIVE HOTNESS. NOT SUITABLE FOR VEGETARIANS. MAY CONTAIN NUTS.







# BACKSTAGE WITH THE BLAIR WITCH

The infamous recluse prepares to end her centuries long absence from the spotlight, aiming to capture the gaze of millions across the nation. From behind the scenes of her debut live performance, she opens up about her struggle with visibility, desire, and isolation.

She tells me to call her El. It's the first thing she says, and it's the first moment I realize she's here, holding a hand out for me to shake. It's not like I wasn't expecting her—I hiked up the Black Hills with an entourage of her people, all of whom assured me I'd get to speak to her directly, after months of back and forth with her team of agents. I stood around the craft table, eating donuts and talking to interns for three hours while I waited for her. I've been hearing, "she'll be with you in just a moment, ma'am," so often it's become a mantra. You get so used to waiting, you can't quite catch up when it's time.

"Hell, I'm starving," she says, hovering over the donuts, piling them on her fingers like rings. "It's so easy to forget to eat when you're caught up in the work."

She bites one, right off her finger, laughing at herself as she does it.

"D'you wanna go somewhere quieter?"

More hiking. She eats while we go, pointing pastries at each tent as we pass by and listing off each camp-member's duty. There's Stella, her calendar organizer and practical astrologer, and Mina, her community manager, Bolt, her fitness coach, and so on. Among her retinue she counts five wardrobe managers, a team of fifteen information specialists—"David keeps my Among Us server warm, can you believe that? I pay him to do that."—and no less than 40 riggers, ready with rope at her word. She boasts that she knows all their names.

"Here we are," she says, leading me into a cozy trailer beneath Coffin Rock. "This was here when we arrived, actually. Saved the facilities guys some trouble."

We're in her makeshift kitchen for another five minutes before she's interrupted by someone from the camp. She handles it quickly, then leans back like there's a lesson to be learned. "It's hard, getting all this running. We've been learning as we go."

It's the signal that I start the interview, lest we get interrupted again. I ply her for more information on just what they're working toward. The media buzz, the ritual preparations, that makes sense for a witch of her stature. But what's the goal for her, personally?

"At the end of this, what I really want is for people to see me," she says, "People always talk about what I'm doing, or what I made them do, but I want what anyone else wants. Haven't you ever wanted a complete stranger on the other side of the world to tell you how good you look? I want that."

What's stopped her before?

"When I was young, things were different. Vanity wasn't just laughable, it was a matter of life and death," she says, crossing her arms, eyes downcast. "And, you know, people get so judgey when someone else has what they want. So I was cursed. My

image will never make it past editorial. Like, that's just a fact. Believe me, I've tried. Even forcing everyone to stay inside, scrolling through every picture posted all day, and photobombing pictures taken at every disaster I caused... didn't work. It's the curse, it counts algorithms as editors."

I ask what's different now, that she's granting interviews and sending press releases. She gives me a sly look, one perfect eyebrow raised.

"You're the first I'm going to tell. It's a little hard to explain, so you're my guinea pig today," she says,

tapping the air in front of my nose. No touching from the original inventor of social distancing. "So the curse says I'll be edited out of anything that could contain my image, right? Any image that contains me: out. Any image that doesn't? Carry on. What I'm going to do is project myself into all light. Everything will be my image. I'm going to sear myself into the backs of everyone's eyes." She laughs at my reaction to this, waving off my praise.

"It's not about me at this point. You reach a certain age, it's like, okay, I get it. I'm super hot. People will do anything I say. Old hat. But what about the people who aren't ready to get lost in the woods to see me? What about the people who can't even leave their rooms—sorry about that, again—how will they see me? I'm doing this for them."



By Octavia C. Saenz

Photography by H. Donahue  
Styling by Black Phillip





"IT DIVINE", I SAY THIS TIME.  
 HOW CAN I EXPLAIN?  
 HOW CAN I EXPLAIN?  
 HOW?  
 CAN I?  
 POSSIBLY EXPLAIN?  
 MONSTERS?  
 YOU TRY HARD

EVERY DAY IS A LITTLE  
 DIFFERENT. EVERY FACE IS  
 HOW ANOTHER'S FACE.  
 CAN I BEGIN?  
 THERE ISN'T THE PLACE.

NO CRACK OR CREVICE  
 RESISTS INSPECTION.  
 NO TEXTURE BEYOND  
 INFLECTION.  
 I CAN DIG IT.

WHY IS THEN, I CAN DIG IT.  
 FIND NO SPACE?  
 WHAT IS GOING ON?  
 WR WITH ME?

I COULD NEVER  
 JUST INK A  
 TINY PIECE  
 GIVE TO  
 ME EVERY  
 BEING  
 GOOD FOR A  
 POWER  
 HOLD THE LINE

SATURN'S RINGS  
 SING AN EERIE, FEARING TONE  
 I WOULDN'T BELIEVE IN IT  
 OBEY

I CAN'T ERASE  
 I DON'T WANT  
 I DON'T WANT  
 I DON'T WANT

I AM AT HOME  
 WITH THE WIND  
 AT MY WING  
 THE SOIL THAT COOLS  
 MY ROOTS  
 UNDER THE STONE  
 AND STARLIGHT  
 WRINKLING  
 WITH WONDER  
 HOPE WILL SEE IT.

THE OCEAN IS OF  
 MADE OF  
 BEADED DROPLETS.  
 CASTAWAYS  
 WILL  
 ALWAYS SEEK  
 EACH OTHER'S GENTLE  
 COMPANY.  
 AND I CAN SWIM.

I GOT TO DO  
 THINGS MY OWN WAY, DARLING.

MEANING  
 CREATURES  
 THEY CALL ME  
 SHIFTER  
 PARANOID SEEKER  
 RULE-BOUND  
 ADDICT  
 OR  
 CONDESCENDING  
 WORKAHOLIC

I PUT MYSELF  
 IN A BOX. I PUT  
 MYSELF IN A BOX  
 AND I WANT  
 WHAT I CANNOT  
 HAVE

I SAID TO BE  
 CHASTEN  
 BOWING TO  
 SECOND FIDDLE  
 AN OBJECT  
 LESS  
 UNTIL CONDENSE  
 MYSELF  
 INTO A  
 POINT

LIES NOT IN FORM  
 NOR IN FUNCTION  
 BUT IN MY WILL AND  
 CONSCIENCE.  
 IN MY EXISTENCE

I HAVE NO DEMONSTRATION  
 BUT MY PROVIDENCE.

ALL MY MIMICRY  
 OF CRIMINAL  
 ACTIVITY  
 BUT THE UNSEEN  
 HAVE SEEN THAT I'LL  
 NEVER RUN AWAY  
 THIS IS MY FACE  
 THIS IS NOT MY FACE

I AM A CHILD  
 COLLECTING  
 AGENCY

PROPHETS!  
 I DON'T LIKE YOU.  
 I DON'T SLEEP. I  
 DON'T BREATHE.

I DON'T HAVE A HEART  
 I DON'T HAVE A MOTHER.  
 I DON'T WORRY.

WHO COULD EVER  
 LOVE SOMEONE  
 LIKE THAT?



EMILY ROSENTHAL





# [UNTITLED WORK]

MYA P.

"Kids these days just aren't as frightened by us as they used to be," she sighed, staring softly out the long window, her hand gripping the organza of the curtain ever so slightly. "Truly a shame."

She still couldn't look her wife in the eye. Amelia felt lonely, insecure, lost. And, Prudence was doing everything she could to try and comfort her.

"Am I doing something wrong?" she asked with a new tone of voice that Prudence couldn't quite put a bony fingertip on.

"Sweetheart, you are doing just fine," the younger lady replied, reaching for her loving partner's hand, the sound of their bones lightly clicking against one another's as she interlocked their phalanges. "You said it yourself - kids these days just don't get scared like they used to. That doesn't make you any less scary."

If Amelia could still blush, she absolutely would have been blushing. Her wife's words touched the spot where her heart once was. "You really think I'm still scary?" she questioned with a voice full of excitement. "I've just been feeling very lackluster these past few weeks, and I didn't know if it was me or not, and -"

She was stopped mid-sentence by Prudence attempting to kiss Amelia's mouth - which had sadly decayed 60 years ago, leaving behind a shiny row of teeth. On-brand for a former dentist.

"You are doing a wonderful job, my darling. Of course, I still think you're scary. I have always thought you were, and always will think you are."

These two love-bones had been together for at least 100 years. Even when they both had two feet still in the grave, they were each other's biggest fans. They had seen each other through so much. Dance recitals, job promotions, dream careers, losing their loved ones, broken bones, and everything in between.

Amelia had a passion for making people's smiles bright, shiny, and clean; when she wasn't trying to hunt down her beloved's secret candy stash, she was excelling in her career and franchising her own orthodontics shop.

Prudence was an orthopedist by day. One broken femur in her childhood, and she never forgot about the kind doctors and nurses who aided her healing. Their shared love of bones, however, wasn't what sent one falling head-over-heels for the other.

By night, Prudence was a jazz singer from deep in the bayou. That soft, feminine, swanky voice made Amelia's heart race at triple speed. The first show she ever attended, the glossy-lipped singer spotted her from the audience and gave her a wink and a smile that stopped her in her tracks. Suddenly, every night she was at the bar, trying to find this woman who dared tempt her. Her family had so many questions and made too many assumptions - Amelia either had to be an alcoholic or had found some scoundrel who wanted to court her.

"We don't listen to jazz in this house. It's dirty, heathen music. And, you damn well know better than to frequent these shops and act like some hussy," she hears her father say in the back of her mind.

Amelia payed him no mind. At the young age of 22, she and the 19-year-old singer became one with each other and with the streets, traveling all across the United States in search of love and freedom.

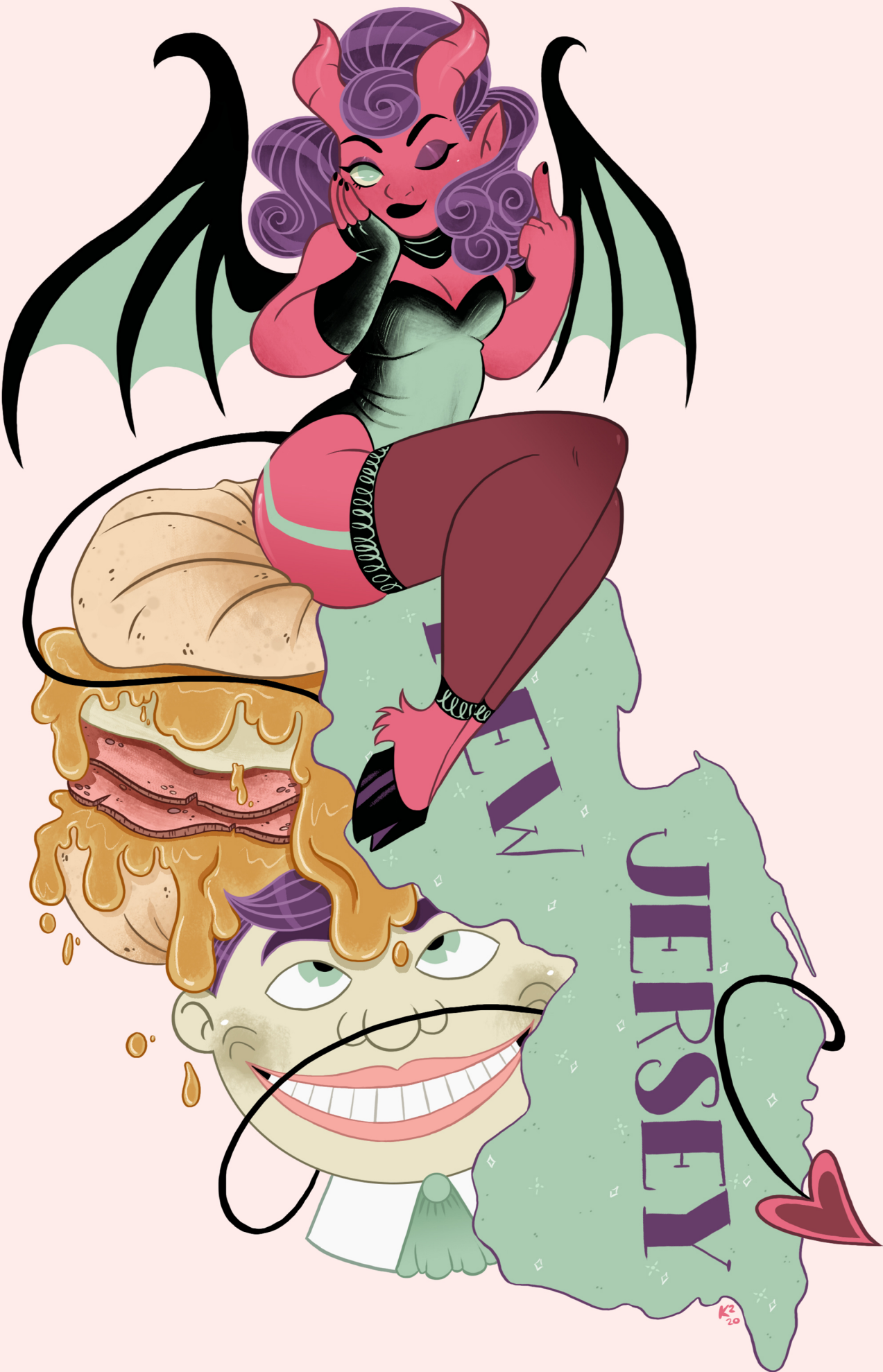
"Is everything okay, love?" Amelia was snapped out of her emotional trance by the sound of that sweet Creole accent she's always fawned over.

"Y-yeah, everything's fine, dear." She struggled to compose herself so her darling wife wouldn't know she was reflecting again.

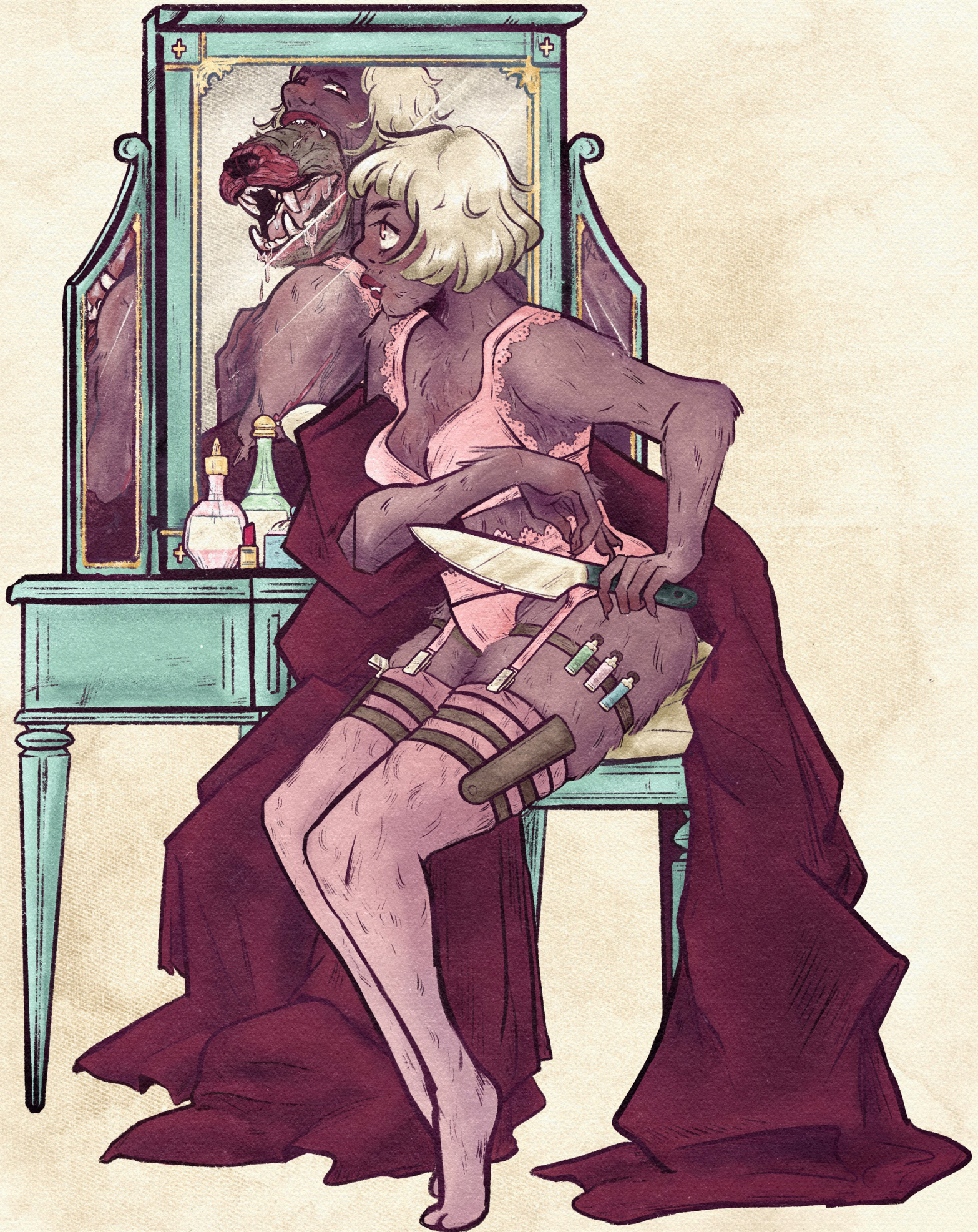
"Well, I've just set supper on the table, why don't you come join me?" She heard the familiar squeak of that antique dining chair as Prudence pulled back the seat to sit.

"Let me turn the furnace on. My bones are rattling." As she was fiddling with the firewood, she heard a mouth full of food say, "Now, you make sure you eat all that food. I can see your ribcage."











# THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF PENTECOST WAITE

CLEVER

It is night, and Pentecost Waite waits. It's something he's grown accustomed to in the 285 years since his death.

Living men have no idea how haunted they are, how myriad the phantoms that swirl about them. This surprised Pentecost when he became a phantom himself. Looking back, it would have been most useful if Reverend Fiske had but once mentioned this from his creaking pulpit, instead of droning ever on about witches. In near three centuries, Pentecost has not encountered a single witch, but he has seen ghosts galore. The truth is, the dead are everywhere.

When he considers it, he cannot help but think bitterly of his own death as the farcical end of a life barely begun. Twenty-five years of unspeakable longing. A single passionate but deeply unwise encounter in the Wenham Common Wood. And in the end, his handsome dalliance, Flee-Fornication Waldron, belatedly lived up to his name and, guilt-ridden, whispered of their sin to another. How swiftly a whisper travels in a community of the godly! Three days later, as his sister answered the door to the dark visages of the Deacon and Constable, Pentecost slipped out the back ell and began to run.

He didn't stop until he reached York, on the northern frontier of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. There, he wagered, his sins could not follow. But in the greatest irony of all, just as he tasted freedom from the stifling press of his former community, a chance to live out his days undisturbed, if not entirely fulfilled, Death came for him--as it so often does when man is least prepared.

The tavern where Pentecost had planned to spend his first night in York was full to bursting at an hour past sundown, as was his bladder on account of the plentiful cheap ale. He'd packed his clay pipe with borrowed tobacco, drew a rushlight from the fire and headed outside to heed nature's insistence. In the gloaming, as Pentecost lit his pipe, the traitorous ale weakened his knees and he lost his footing. He hadn't noticed the embankment there, and fell backwards down the slope, striking his head on a large stone. Blinding pain, and then nothing.

After death, lucky souls are immediately ascendant, or so Pentecost assumes. The unlucky linger on the earth. And the unluckiest, by force or circumstance become trapped, attached to some meaningless object: a kid-skin glove, an oak aumbry, a cocked beaver hat, or in Pentecost's case, the stem of his clay smoking pipe. The best he can discern, he must have bitten it into pieces when his head struck the rock, and his soul rushed in. He is tethered to this clay piece like a ship to an anchor. He is not alone. More tethered souls dot the landscape around him, just out of reach. A garden of ghosts.

In death, the monotony is pervasive. Through the decades, Pentecost has watched the tavern become a home, watched children grow and die. Clothing and speech change, but people remain the same. He expected to go on like this, a silent shipwrecked observer, as the pipe stem crumbled to dust.

That is, until HE came.

People tour the former tavern now in eager groups. They cluster in the back on the spot where the drunken taverners once pissed and speak loftily of The History Of The Place. Sometimes, one of the group hangs back when the rest have moved on. They gaze at the building, peruse the ground, pocket a sherd of broken pottery. And that is how Pentecost came to be found.

How the young man spotted the artifact in the shadow of the embankment, Pentecost will never know. In a moment, the pipe stem was plucked from the ground by nimble, curious fingers, and Pentecost with it. Gently pushed into a darkened pocket, he was free.

How to describe the whirlwind journey to the young man's home later that day? Impossibly fast, a hurricane of color and speed in one of the horseless carriages Pentecost had observed for years with curiosity and trepidation. The young man's rooms were small, simple, bright with windows. He emptied his pockets on a table by his bedstead, and examined the pipe stem again. Pentecost stood awkwardly in the corner, a guest without an invitation.

The young man, brown of hair and eye, was disarmingly handsome in a boyish way, polite and soft-spoken as he greeted his neighbors earlier on the doorstep. And he smelled divine. Something stirred within Pentecost.

That night, when the young man retired to bed, and with nothing preventing him, Pentecost slid beneath the covers. He



lay awake all night, intoxicated by their proximity, memorizing every crease and curve of the young man's face, the sound of his breath, the slow beat of his heart. That such exquisite intimacy unavailable in life could be so easily come by in death was both an amazement and a grief in turns.

In the morning, the young man arose and left the house. By night he returned. And so Pentecost slipped into a new and wondrous routine: nights spent pressed close beside the young man, and days spent exploring his rooms.

The young man was an avid reader, Pentecost quickly discovered, and half-opened books lay on nearly every surface. Through experimentation Pentecost learned to turn the pages, and once he did, he read everything in sight. At last, he felt like he could face eternity.

It is night, and Pentecost Waite waits.

The young man is late this evening. When he arrives home, he looks weary from work. He has a quiet supper. He washes the dishes and spends a long while looking out the kitchen window towards the rising moon. When he makes his way to the bedroom, Pentecost follows.

The young man empties his pockets on the bedside table, as he does every night. Tonight he picks up the pipe stem there and turns it over and over between his fingers. Time seems to slow.

"I know you're here," he says at last. He raises his head to look around the room.

Pentecost freezes.

"You're the one who's been reading all my books, aren't you? I see the shape of your head on the pillow every morning."

The young man holds up the pipe stem, eyes still searching the room.

"You came in on this, and now you're here with me." It's more of a statement than a question.

Silence hangs thick as a curtain. After a moment, the young man opens a drawer in the bedside table and slides the pipe stem in gently, reverently, as if it were Pentecost's immortal soul itself.

"So you don't get lost ever again," the young man murmurs.

Pentecost realizes he is quivering.

Slowly, slowly, the young man raises his arms, pulls his shirt off over his head. He's beautiful in the half-light, achingly so. They face each other in the deep stillness that follows. Then the young man holds out his hand.

"Come to bed," he says, and smiles.

Pentecost doesn't wait, not one single minute more.









art by Duffdora  
© Duffdora/ArtStation  
PS do not steal, please  
or I'll have you  
out of business!!



ISABELLE AUSTIN

# MORGUE





# THE LIGHT WILL FALTER AND WILL FADE

VAL

Ritchie isn't surprised when he comes back from work to find Lennie on his couch, waving a mostly full bottle of vodka his way with a cheery "Alright, ya wee bawbag". Breaking into his flat for impromptu visits is just what Lennie does.

He is surprised to see Lennie's green mohawk has been shaved, though.

Ritchie thinks about asking. Maybe Lennie's tired of it. Maybe he's decided to lean into the skinhead punk scene – a terrible choice if so; with his blue eyes and hint of a blond buzz he'll be hounded by Nazi fucks. Maybe the small cuts on Lennie's scalp and the green bruise around his left eye are unrelated signs of the kind of scuffles you're bound to get in in some parts of Dundee.

Ritchie doesn't ask, and Lennie doesn't tell, taking a swig of the vodka he keeps on calling "their pre's".

"I'm not going out," Ritchie says.

"Och, well, drink anyway."

He doesn't like the way alcohol muffles reality, mixing it as if it were a pack of cards that it then throws in his face. *Is this the ace of spades*, it asks, and they're *all* ace of spades, and he sways in and out of realities, sometimes he's at The Church in Dundee, sometimes the Liquid Room in Edinburgh, he rubs his eyes and he's at The World's End on the Royal Mile, he opens them and he's having dinner with his parents–

But Lennie slides to the floor, wagging the vodka bottle in his direction, and Ritchie takes a swig.

They sit on the carpet, cross-legged, passing the bottle back and forth, and eventually they decide that it's almost Halloween, and what better way to celebrate it than a little séance, like they used to do when they were children and evoked a minor demon that haunted Sean Walsh for a month.

"Maybe let's tone it down a bit this time around, aye? Landlord'll have my guts for garters if he finds Beelzebub in the fridge."

"Landlords are cunts, anyway."

"Aye, still. My deposit."

Lennie hums, hunched over the Ouija board he's currently drawing on paper. It's not perfect, but magic is nothing but a bunch of shite that happens out of spite for reality. The worse it looks, the more of a 'fuck you' it is when it works, making it better by default.

Ritchie looks at the bottle in his hand, Grey Goose l'original. The most expensive vodka Tesco has to offer. Not that it matters, since it's almost certainly been nicked.

Still, he's grateful, though he finds himself wishing for something sweeter. Amaretto, perhaps.

The alcohol running through his veins – just a touch, nothing he isn't used to, but still enough – makes the smokescreen that is his reality just a little hazier, a little more fluid. There are layers, one for each choice he's made in his life, all running in front of his eyes, superimposed like one of those posters where the subject changes depending on where one looks. Lives he could be and is living, just as long as he focuses on them.

There, the same hand that's holding vodka now is holding a cup of tea while he watches true crime in bed. Here he sits, on the shitty carpet of a shitty bedsit in Edinburgh that's also the wooden chair with a tartan cushion in his parents' kitchen in Dundee, he's surrounded by the smell of roast as his father asks him how uni's going, and he's on the pavement down Lothian road, eating chips with cheese while Lennie hurls behind him. He looks down at the Idles t-shirt he's wearing, stained by oil after a day working at the chippy, and feels it shifting into the faded Metallica one that he uses as pyjamas, and he's in bed, Drill Queen is telling him that



they're born lover, born livid, he's holding his bass in his lap and his hands pluck along to the rhythm of the song, he can feel them scratching his calloused fingers—

“Fuck, Ritchie, do you have to do that while I'm smashed? That's giving me the boak.”

Ritchie takes a swig of the Amaretto in his hand. It's like cake in a bottle, a little treat after a long day.

“Sorry, barra. It's hard to control after a bevvie.”

“Yeah yeah, just stay put, yeah?” Lennie says, chucking the pencil off to the side and sliding the makeshift Ouija board between them. “Right, any requests?”

Ritchie shrugs, leaving the bottle to the side and placing his hands on the paper. “Surprise me.”

Lennie gives him a nod before closing his eyes, fingers quickly drumming over the Ouija board before fanning over the surface.

He takes a deep breath.

“Alright, you dead fucks.”

He says it with the tone of a high priest proclaiming the word of the dark and mysterious gods of old to the masses. It's a deliberate juxtaposition. *They don't deserve respect just because they died*, he had told Ritchie once.

“We ask to speak with the souls that still walk. Come have a chat, if you dare.”

Silence.

That's normal. Or at least, it's not *not* normal. Few spirits go for bombast when they appear. They usually prefer to tiptoe into the room, pushing whatever they're using as a planchette (sometimes a piece of paper, more often just their fingers) into place with the nervous energy of a child called to make a speech before the class.

Then, a chill.

At first Ritchie thinks it might just be a draft – the windows are single-pane, of course, might as well be made of paper – but then the cold curls up his spine, sinking into his bones. He looks down at his arms and he sees his hairs standing up, feels his fingertips tingling with static energy.

When he looks up at Lennie, he finds him staring back, his normally blue eyes now red.

“Who are you?” The one who isn't Lennie asks, his voice a hiss, half-audible whispers crawling around his words.

Ritchie shifts in his spot.

“Friends,” He says. His mouth feels dry.

“We have no friends.”

The whispers slither around the room, slinking into the shadows, thrumming in the corners of Ritchie's eyes. He knows it's a trick, or at the very least something that will disappear once the guest is gone, but he doesn't trust himself to look.

“This is no place for mortals. You must leave.”

The whispers writhe all over Ritchie's skin, leaving behind uncountable cold trails. It feels like ice-cold fingers tracing his body.

“With all due respect,” He says, eyes locked with the guest's even as his skin crawls, “this is *my* flat.”

The whispers go silent.



Ritchie's hands slowly grip the paper, ready to tear the Ouija board apart and send the spirit away. He feels fingers on his skin, sees the shadows writhing in the corner of his eyes, and he steadies himself, readies himself to *move* before anything can get him.

And then the guest smiles.

Ritchie frowns, because the smile is unmistakably Lennie's, but those eyes are still red, and while he tries to make sense of it the guest snatches the bottle and smashes it on the ground. Ritchie drops the paper to protect his face from the shower of glass, and when he lowers his arms the guest is holding the shattered bottle like a weapon and Lennie's left arm is bleeding.

Ritchie stares at the blood pouring over Lennie's hand, gushing from the slash running down his forearm, and for a moment his sight is clear. There are no other possibilities, no veils of reality dancing in front of him. There's just Lennie's arm, covered in so much blood that it shouldn't be possible, and Ritchie feels trapped in his own body, his limbs frozen, and when he looks up the guest is smirking. One moment the bottle is glinting in his hand, the next it's in Ritchie's guts and it hurts, it's the worst pain he's ever felt, even worse than that time Calum MacTear glassed him in 'Spoons—

But the agony is enough to wake him up. His eyes are wide, and yeah, he didn't manage to move in *this* reality, but in another he threw himself to the side, and he's there now, lying on the carpet with nothing but the memory of glass tearing his stomach apart. The guest roars, so do the shadows, and Ritchie throws himself back next to the guest, snatching the Ouija board with desperate fingers, and the guest raises his arm, this time going for the head, and *maybe* Ritchie can shift again but *fuck getting stabbed*, honestly, and he tears the paper in half, his mind hissing *fuckfuckfuckfuck*—

"Ritchie?"

And he breathes in, a wave of relief hitting him as he sees Lennie's blue eyes, only for the panic to come back once he realizes the horror in them, the tears welling up, the blood still gushing from his arm.

"I'm getting the kitchen paper," Ritchie says, rolling to his feet.

"D-did—"

The bottle falls to the ground with a clink that makes Ritchie wince as he grabs as many sheets of kitchen paper as possible.

"I—I killed you. I—"

"Shh," he shushes, rushing back next to Lennie, pressing the paper against his arm, "I'm here, I'm fine."

"I *killed* you, I just—"

"It's *fine*, I'm fine, don't think about it."

"I—I— w-what is *wrong* with me?"

"Nothing is!" Ritchie snaps. He breathes in, forces himself to focus back on the arm in his hands. "Some spooky fuck walked in and ruined everything. It was a *mistake*. Everybody makes mistakes."

Lennie laughs, a sharp, painful broken thing that seems to hurt as it comes out. It certainly makes Ritchie wince.

"You don't," Lennie chokes out between chuckles, "You can *choose*. You get to *choose* your, your *drink*, your *evening*, your whole *life*, and I'm— I'm *stuck* in a fucking hole, and, and *fuck*, all I do is make it *worse*."

The blood is slowly seeping through the kitchen paper, and Ritchie presses it harder against Lennie's forearm, so hard that his knuckles turn white. *You don't*, he thinks, the memory of glass tearing through his flesh making his stomach itch, and he opens his mouth to say it.

"I choose *you*," He croaks. His mouth feels dry. His throat is like wrinkled paper, crinkling against itself. "Now shut the fuck up."











# MAKEUP COUNTER SOLD OUT OF MY LIPSTICK, CAN I WEAR YOURS

JESS B

When the shadows shift in the darkness of your room, she can see you. She can hear your breath quicken behind the cage of your ribs, and can feel the pace of your heartbeat hammer out like a big brass band.

They don't have those anymore, not like they did when she was young and peachy-cheeked, blood thrumming in those veins where only smoke resides now.

She lives in the corners of your eyes and the cracklepop of the victrola. When you roll up your nylons you can feel her envy from the bed, the clips of your garter belt sticking just a little too much to be natural.

Envy and lust are such confused emotions.

You leave the windows open at night and wonder if the swish of curtains has always sounded just like the rustle of a skirt.

Her rolled curls and delicate waves give her away, this wartime beauty. Your silverbacked mirror faces the hall and you cannot shake the feeling that she checks her impeccable lipstick in it when you aren't looking.

Her harlot scarlet mouth makes your soft baby pink Revlon feel childish and heavy on your lips. Like a little girl playing with mother's makeup.

You look for her in the women on the street, catching yourself staring too long at the places where hemlines used to land.

Your family comes for your birthday, treats you to a movie and while your younger sister swoons for Frankie, your eyes stray to the curve of Annette's hips, drawn like magnets and you cannot look away as tears slipslide down your face.

You rage at her when you close the door behind you, shutting out your family the way you've wanted to all night. This sinful, lustful spectre who flits through your peripherals and taunts you with her red red mouth, you scream and shriek and collapse to the floor, you pathetic mess of tears.

You wake up in your bed, the memory of a plush-lipped kiss pressed to your forehead and a smudge of scarlet above your brow to prove it.

The repercussions of your shameful fit ache through your head, and when you check your cabinets, you find them woefully lacking.

Your ghost watches you from your chair, perched on the edge with her legs crossed daintily at the ankles. You refuse to look, and as you lock the door you start to wonder when you began to think of her as yours.

The pharmacy has a rack of pulpy paperbacks, priced to sell. You spin them lazily, and pick through one with disinterest, some story about murder and betrayal.

When you go to return it to its space, you see it. Crammed into the rack like whoever saw it last was hoping no one else would see it again, and intrigued, you extract it carefully, smoothing the bent pages with your fingertips.

The illustrated woman on the cover wears but her underthings, staring at her bedmate with an expression you recognize. Her bedfellow is only visible from behind, the planes of creamy white shoulders and a disheveled bubble flip hair-do her only features.

And something in your brain clicks, whirs like the rotary dial on the telephone, and clicks again. The book is only a dime, but you slip it into your pocketbook when the pharmacist has his back turned.

It takes you four days to work up the gumption to open it.

She smiles behind you in the mirror, white white teeth behind those scarlet lips and your heart stumblesteps in time with the record spinning on the vic. You pretend, you're always pretending, you cannot see her, that she does not affect you, but now she is leaning over your shoulder, the vaguest whispers of lily-of-the-valley still clinging to her hair.

You cannot breathe.

The book falls from your grasp, lands with a crinkle-paged thud at your feet.

And that red red mouth tastes like the memory of honey.



*Thank you*

# FOR READING !

We hope that you're staying safe and practicing responsible social distancing to the best of your ability!

We wanted to put together this zine as a little treat for everyone who feels a little disheartened this Halloween - we hope we've managed to raise your SPIRITS!

A massive thanks to all of our contributors who have worked very hard to produce some absolutely smashing work; please check out their socials and let them know how awesome and cool they are

We wish you all the best, and hope we'll see you again next halloween with more PETRIFYING PINUPS and GLAMOUROUS GHOULS!

Happy Halloween!

*Tiggs x*